

A NEW ALLIANCE FOR A NEW CENTURY

IVO DAALDER

We live in extraordinary times – times in which the winds of uncertainty reach our doorstep from anywhere on the planet. Yet our security institutions are anachronistic. On the cusp of the Lisbon Summit, US Ambassador to NATO, Ivo Daalder, describes how, by working together, the Alliance can be refashioned to tackle the security challenges of the twenty-first century.

In the last gasps of the twentieth century, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) confronted a paradox. The fight that it had been built to win – conventional conflict in Europe – ended without firing a shot. The notion of a peace dividend captured the security discourse, even among the most stalwart supporters of defence spending.

But then just as strangely – at least it seemed so at the time – violence erupted in the Balkans. Europe was no longer at peace. Stunned with the responsibility of unifying the continent as Yugoslavia collapsed, NATO's reaction was slow.

In time, the Alliance came to the right decisions – intervening to end a bloody war and staying to keep the peace. NATO also set out to bring former adversaries into the transatlantic fold – an unprecedented feat of European unity. Achieving consensus on both counts was gruelling, but NATO's leaders bent the arc of European history in a way that would provide greater safety, security and opportunity for all.

NATO's New Paradox

Today NATO confronts another paradox – one that will require equally bold and far-reaching decisions. The transatlantic community is less vulnerable to conventional conflict than at any time in its history. Yet NATO is busier than ever protecting the populations and territory of the North Atlantic area from harm.

Some of what keeps NATO busy is the unfinished business of the

twentieth century. Arms control regimes have frayed at the edges, and require expert repair. For several countries, the transition to democracy has proceeded in fits and starts, including for some of NATO's neighbours. Weak states have difficulties controlling their territory and providing for their people. In post-conflict environments, forging co-operation takes longer than anyone would like. And, as Secretary Clinton noted in Paris in January 2010, '... in too many places, economic opportunity is still too narrow and shallow.'

The new century has delivered new threats – threats that are increasingly globalised, and increasingly complex. The attacks of 11 September 2001 in New York and the Pentagon took the lives not just of Americans, but of citizens of ninety countries. The economic aftermath affected not just the east coast of the United States, but the entire world. Subsequent attacks – Madrid in 2004, London in 2005 – and countless other foiled and deterred attempts demonstrate that transnational terrorist organisations seek to reach across the many thresholds of our shared transatlantic home.

The uninvited guest of transnational terrorism – egged on by its cousins of social, ethnic and religious strife – has not arrived alone. Other dangers are making their way toward the region from dark corners – threats that affect all countries equally, and from which no nation is immune.

These sources of instability ride the coattails of globalisation, masked within trade networks that stoke the economic engines of the world. Elements to fabricate chemical or biological weapons and their means of delivery, for example, have a habit of hiding among the tens of millions of inconspicuous containers of legitimate trade. Cyber networks carry new ideas and opportunities at unfathomable speeds, yet lurking in datastreams are new vulnerabilities to commerce and national security. And piracy – relegated to nuisance levels for centuries – is on a surprising uptick.

New challenges are also adding complexity to our security environment. Climate change is cracking not just Arctic ice shelves, but long-standing ways of life. Criminal networks traffic in weapons, drugs and people, casting long shadows across international borders. Uncertainty of energy supplies has the potential to disrupt livelihoods and commerce on an unprecedented scale. And riding atop this entire milieu is an economic crisis of historic proportions.

So although the North Atlantic area is peaceful and stable, new challenges to our safety and security are knocking at our door – all less predictable and more pernicious than those we confronted in the past.

NATO's New Normal

NATO has stepped up to the challenge of this new security environment. Today, its forces are deployed in the largest



ISAF soldiers look towards the site of a suicide car bombing in Kabul, Afghanistan, January 2010. *Courtesy of AP Photo/Altaf Qadri.*

operation in its history, nearly 150,000 strong, to fight a violent insurgency, train local police and army forces, and keep the peace in Afghanistan – all at a distance of 5,000 km from NATO headquarters in Brussels. Thousands of NATO troops also continue to foster stability and security in the Balkans. And for the past two years, NATO ships have plowed the seas off the coast of East Africa to counter the growing scourge of piracy. For the Allies, an extremely busy NATO is the ‘new normal.’

And NATO is not alone. Every NATO-led operation – stabilising Afghanistan, ensuring peace in the Balkans, and countering pirates off the coast of Somalia – involves forces from non-NATO nations. Forty-seven countries contribute troops to ISAF, and several other partners help to strengthen Afghanistan’s institutions and economy. Similarly, nearly 20 per cent of personnel participating in NATO’s efforts to secure and stabilise Kosovo hail from non-NATO countries.

A New NATO

NATO’s operational pace illustrates that although the global security environment has changed, NATO’s *raison d’être* has not. Our enduring task as a transatlantic

community is to help our nations, our Alliance, and the wider world address the serious and often distant dangers that threaten us all.

NATO’s new normal is not a blip on the radar screen – it represents a fundamental shift of what Allies need from the world’s premier military alliance to enhance the safety and security of its populations and territory. NATO will continue to be a beacon of stability and peace and freedom in Europe, as it was in the twentieth century, but it must adapt to new realities. As Secretary Clinton has said, ‘now we are called to address some of the great challenges in human history. And to meet them, we are required to modernise and strengthen our partnership.’

Strategic Concept

Modernising and strengthening NATO will start with a new Strategic Concept – one that will guide NATO for the coming decade. And in November, the twenty-eight leaders of the Alliance will undertake this bold and momentous task, setting forth their vision for how NATO will tackle the security challenges of today and tomorrow.

This vision will start with a premise proffered by early transatlantic visionaries: that the Atlantic Alliance is a community of allies brought together by a set of common values. Because we share the same values, we confront the same security challenges – challenges that are faced more successfully together than apart.

An extremely busy NATO is the ‘new normal’

Atop that foundation are two very sturdy pillars – NATO’s core tasks. NATO’s first pillar is collective defence: the commitment, enshrined in Article V of the Washington Treaty, to respond to an attack against one as an attack against all. A key tenet of NATO’s founding, collective defence is not just an enduring principle of the Alliance; it is also the mutually beneficial way to counter the complexity of a changing world. Knowing that each Ally will come to the others’ aid enables NATO to pool resources and talent, and thus develop more robust solutions to difficult security problems.

NATO's second pillar is co-operative security. It is not enough to be ready to react to threats that may occur. Instead, NATO must work with others to shape the security environment so that threats do not materialise. NATO has extended the hand of partnership for nearly two decades, and both the scope and quality of the Alliance's partnerships continue to improve. In many ways, it is NATO's commitment to partnering with like-minded countries and organisations on mutual security concerns that most differentiates the NATO of yesteryear from the NATO of today – a positive leap forward for the Alliance.

NATO is a uniquely capable security organisation

Holding these two pillars in place – and completing the house that NATO built – is the Alliance's roof, solidly constructed of the right capabilities and organisational capacity to address any challenge that Allies might face. After all, the Atlantic Alliance doesn't just unite twenty-eight nations through their commitment to common values, collective defence and co-operative security. NATO is a uniquely capable security organisation – one that can field forces that operate together in any environment, control operations anywhere via an integrated military command structure, and bring to bear common capabilities that few countries could buy by themselves.

This essential structure has stood the test of time for half a century. And while the security environment has changed, NATO's core values, the twin tasks of collective defence and co-operative security, and its common capabilities remain the fundamental foundation of the Atlantic Alliance.

New Organisational Structures

Agreement on NATO's new Strategic Concept will mean much less if at the same time NATO's leaders fail to reorient it from a twentieth century alliance to a twenty-first century alliance and regional security hub. Executing this vision requires streamlining NATO's

organisations and investing in the capabilities, exercises, training and shared command structure that bind the Allies into an integrated whole. NATO has served Allies well for over sixty-one years – but only a persistent focus on addressing emerging security challenges will keep it that way.

NATO's command structure needs to be leaner, more flexible – and most importantly, more deployable. Today, NATO's command structure is largely static. Current and emerging threats require a command structure that is still commonly funded and commonly organised – but also more agile, nimble, and tailored to twenty-first century security needs.

NATO's agencies and headquarters require similar streamlining or, more colloquially, to offer greater 'bang for the buck.' The Alliance must drive greater efficiencies into these institutions, as well as refocus their efforts on today's most pressing threats.

New Capabilities

NATO also needs to invest in new capabilities that will allow the Alliance to deal with threats, not just of yesterday or today but of tomorrow. As Allies prepare for Lisbon, the United States has proposed, and NATO is considering, an initiative that stresses the importance of funding, acquiring and fielding ten critical capabilities. The most important among these are those capabilities that NATO needs to counter new threats and thus be relevant for the modern day. Three of these stand out: missile defence, cyber and civil-military co-operation.

Missile Defence

The Obama administration has laid out a new approach to address the threat of ballistic missiles delivering weapons of mass destruction. Unlike previous plans, this approach provides the Alliance with increased flexibility in meeting a variety of potential missile threats against the transatlantic area. The technical solution at the core of this approach, the SM-3 missile system, has repeatedly demonstrated its effectiveness, and two years ago was even used against a dangerous, out of control satellite plunging to earth. The system can be

based on land or at sea, accepts inputs from a variety of off-board sensors, and can be easily redeployed and upgraded as necessary to meet the evolving nature of the threat. Such inherent flexibility has led the Obama administration to name this plan the Phased Adaptive Approach, which neatly sums up the incremental and elastic nature of the future capability.

Over the past few years, NATO has funded a command and control system called ALTBMD, which links nationally owned radars and interceptors into a much more capable defence against ballistic missile attacks. Through this NATO-funded system, early warning data from one Ally can be sent to an interceptor fielded by another Ally to protect deployed forces against attack. By linking these systems together, Allies are able to make their individual national capabilities more effective at far less cost. Later this year, NATO leaders will decide whether to expand this capability, at a cost to the twenty-eight Allies of less than €200 million over ten years, to knit together sensors and interceptors capable of protecting NATO territory and populations against longer-range missile attacks.

NATO needs to invest in new capabilities

Once operational, this capability will protect all twenty-eight Allies and can extend its aegis of safety to other nations – to include NATO partners like Russia. The system thus provides an opportunity to engage with our Russian partners – also threatened by the proliferation of ballistic missiles – through a substantive co-operative missile defence framework. Not only will this engagement allay any concerns that Russia may have about NATO territorial missile defence, but it could also improve Russia's already substantive anti-missile capabilities.¹

Cyber-Defence

Cyber attacks are also emerging as a shared threat. Our networks are interconnected, with data moving easily from one domain to another. And inside the legitimate flow of information are malicious attacks that seek to exploit

the very connectivity that brings Allies together. Given the global nature of this threat, and the relative ease with which malicious actors can reach across international borders, even a country as powerful as the United States cannot protect its cyberspace alone – nor can any of the Allies. So Allies must work together to protect this shared domain of cyberspace.

Every NATO-led operation involves forces from non-NATO nations

We should start by improving our cyber hygiene – ensuring basic cyber security protection, such as containing viruses. But we also need to build a cyber-perimeter; that way, we will better understand what is coming into our systems. Cyber-perimeters are needed not only in the United States – especially on military and critical infrastructure networks – but in all NATO countries.

When there is an intrusion, we need to actively defend our networks to ensure the intrusion does not do incalculable damage. The Obama administration is deeply committed to making cyber-security a reality, not just for the United States but indeed for NATO. And by working together, we can secure our shared cyberspace more effectively than individual nations working alone.

Civil-Military Co-operation

Strengthening NATO's capacity for civil-military co-operation is the third area that needs NATO leaders' focused attention. The sense has been growing for some time that dealing with fragile states requires a comprehensive approach, one that brings together civilian and military resources and unifies their activities. Civil-military co-operation is especially useful at smoothing the way for post-conflict tasks, such as transitioning responsibility for security and governance to local populations – and this work must start before combat operations end.

Lessons from NATO operations already show the path forward. Ambassador Mark Sedwill's appoint-

ment as the NATO Senior Civilian Representative to Afghanistan and co-equal counterpart to General David Petraeus, commander of the International Security Assistance Force, has proven a fruitful step in fostering civil-military co-operation across the entire set of security actors working in Afghanistan. He is playing a tremendously important role in shaping transition with Afghanistan's elected officials and ensuring that NATO's efforts on the ground are mutually supportive and non-duplicative.

For the Alliance, the question is not 'whether' NATO needs to grow its capacity to co-ordinate and lead civil-military operations. Rather the question is 'how much' expertise is needed within NATO, how to embed that expertise among the Alliance's existing organisational structures, and with whom and how NATO should partner. And while NATO's preference is to work with like-minded countries and organisations to the maximum extent possible, Allies cannot ignore the reality that when it comes to the most volatile operating areas, it often falls to the Alliance to lay the groundwork for follow-on stabilisation and reconstruction efforts.

Working Smarter by Working Together

Sceptics argue that the critical capabilities proposed by the United States are not affordable, especially given the current global financial crisis and need for budgetary reductions. Such an approach implies that the Alliance should cede the security of its populations and territories to whatever the winds of uncertainty blow toward our transatlantic door. These arguments fail to recognise a key lesson from NATO's long and successful past: that by pooling resources, Allies are able to provide greater security for their populations and territories than when acting alone.

After all, the more capacity we build together, the less capacity each of us needs to produce on our own. And in a fiscal climate in which every country is looking for ways to extract greater value from its defence spending, leveraging the economy of scale of Allies can be extremely useful. In fact, NATO itself is a perfect example.

NATO's commonly funded budget amounts to just 0.3 per cent of overall Allied defence spending – three pennies for every \$10 spent. NATO common funding is a bargain – for the largest European countries, a contribution of about ten cents buys a dollar's worth of defence, because the other ninety cents are paid by other Allies.

Yet the temptation in many Allied capitals facing austerity is to try and balance defence budgets on the backs of this common budget. In some capitals, the first thing cut is what is spent on NATO – that 0.3 per cent, on average, of defence budgets. The last thing cut is what is spent at home.

Not only will this not work – the sums involved are just too tiny to help Allied budgets – but it is a shortsighted way to provide for our common security. Not all Allies realise this, and we need to figure out how to turn that around. When it comes to confronting the globalised threats of the twenty-first century, we need to spend smarter – and that means spending more together. Defence does not necessarily need to cost more if we leverage the efficiencies of working together.

The global security environment has changed, but NATO's raison d'être has not

What works for individual Allies – unifying our efforts – will also work for the Alliance as a whole. Through NATO, Allies share the burden – and reap the mutual benefit – of security spending. Similarly, through its partnerships, NATO shares the burden – and reaps the mutual benefit – of combining efforts with like-minded countries and international organisations.

Only by working across international frontiers can we build the kind of security networks that today's threats demand. NATO should continue to seek new partnerships, as well as deepen the mutual benefit of existing partnerships.

NATO-EU

A fundamental – and obvious – relationship for NATO is with the

European Union, especially given that twenty-one countries are members of both organisations. And in the field – to include Afghanistan, the Balkans and off the coast of Somalia – NATO and EU representatives have strong working relationships. But when it comes to co-ordinating activities at higher political levels – such as unifying the two organisations' efforts on a particular security issue or discussing how an impending change in responsibilities or resources by one organisation might impact the other – discussions are few and far between. We need to figure out how to push past political impasses so that the two organisations can work more effectively together. As the new US National Security Strategy makes clear, the United States seeks to 'strengthen existing European institutions so that they are more inclusive and more effective in building confidence, reducing tensions, and protecting freedom'. One way of realising that vision is to strengthen the relationship between NATO and the EU.

European Partners

Of course, NATO also has partnerships with individual European nations, which fall into two basic categories. First, there are European countries, such as Montenegro, that aspire to become Alliance members. Second, there are European states, such as Sweden and Finland that, without joining NATO, want to work with NATO on shared security goals. To join or not to join – the choice is up to partners. But all of them contribute to security and stability in Europe and beyond.

Partners across the Globe

NATO's partners across the globe – such as Australia, Japan, New Zealand and

South Korea – are also a growth area for NATO partnerships, especially as the Alliance transitions into an important regional hub within a global security network. Global partnerships are a tremendous resource for NATO, as they enable like-minded countries to co-ordinate their security efforts and thus share the burden of advancing global security and prosperity in a complex and uncertain world.

NATO has extended the hand of partnership for nearly two decades

Russia

Strengthening NATO's relationship with Russia is also important for European security. We are exploring enhanced practical co-operation with Russia on missile defence, in support of the Afghan Government and National Security Forces, and in combating terrorism, narcotics and piracy.

NATO's Next Decade Starts at Lisbon

Nearly every country recognises that it cannot deal with today's increasingly globalised and complex threats by itself. Modern security challenges require countries to work with others, and our best option is to work through successful security institutions such as NATO.

As new challenges like transnational terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and cyber-attacks demonstrate, the nature of the threat is such that we cannot wait. New security challenges are no longer looming on the horizon; they are already at our doorstep. Addressing these challenges is not

merely a matter of political agreement, but also of adapting and reforming our institutions – starting with NATO – so they are oriented and prepared for the global age in which we now live.

At Lisbon, we have a chance to revitalise the most successful military alliance in history. We should drive toward November with a singular purpose: that ten years from now, we view Lisbon as the opening salvo of NATO's most productive decade. Doing so requires refashioning NATO's vision, organisation and capabilities so that it can tackle the challenges of the twenty-first century with as much success as it tackled the challenges of the previous century. If we do so, the Lisbon Summit will showcase NATO at its best: energised, revitalised and building on our shared history to recast the Alliance we have into the Alliance we need. ■

Ivo Daalder is the United States Permanent Representative on the Council of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, with the rank and status of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary.

Ambassador Daalder was formerly a Senior Fellow in Foreign Policy Studies at the Brookings Institution, specialising in American foreign policy, European security and transatlantic relations, and national security affairs. He is the author of twelve books, including most recently In the Shadow of the Oval Office: Profiles of the National Security Advisers and the Presidents they Served—From JFK to George W. Bush (with I M Destler; Simon & Schuster, 2009) and the award-winning America Unbound: The Bush Revolution in Foreign Policy (with James M Lindsay; Brookings Institution Press, 2003).

Note

- 1 For more on ALTBMD, the Phased Adaptive Approach and missile defence co-operation with Russia, see Roberto Zadra, 'NATO, Russia and Missile Defence: Towards the Lisbon Summit' in this issue, pp. 20-25.